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Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DPW-01 IO-12 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 NIC-01 ACDA-19 AID-20 IGA-02

RSR-01 /160 W
---------- 029677
R 270745 Z MAR 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9229
USDEL FRANCE
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5013

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS
SUBJECT: MR 2 DAILY SITREP, MAR. 26, 1973

FOLLOWING RECEIVED AS MR 2 SITREP FOR MARCH 26:

1. SUMMARY: INCIDENT COUNT REMAINS LOW BUT TROOP CASUALTIES INCREASE. BAO LOC ICCS SPLITS OVER REACTION TO VC ATTACK IN LAM DONG. BUON HO DISTRICT (DARLAC) RELIEF OPERATION BOGS DOWN.

2. MILITARY SITUATION: COMMUNIST FORCES GENERALLY STICKING TO SAME PATTERN OF INDIRECT FIRE AND SMALL- UNIT GROUND ATTACKS THAT HAVE TYPIFIED ACTION OF PAST FEW WEEKS, BUT NOW SEEM MORE SERIOUS. FOURTEEN INCIDENTS REPORTED DURING LAST 24- HOUR PERIOD DIFFER SUBSTANTIALLY FROM NORM IN UNUSUALLY HIGH NUMBER OF TROOP CASUALTIES SUSTAINED BY BOTH SIDES (FRIENDLY: 22 WIA, 3 KIA; ENEMY: 23 KIA).

3. MAJORITY OF ACTION OCCURRED IN NORTHERN BINH DINH, BUT SHARPEST FIGHTING WAS BETWEEN UNIDENTIFIED VC UNIT AND RF COMPANY PATROLLING APPROX. 13 KM. WSW OF FIRE BASE 40 (ZA 105788), IN SOUTHERN KONTUM. FIGHTING BEGAN AT 1030 HOURS ON MAR. 25 WHEN VC MORTARED RF COMPANY, THEN FOLLOWED WITH GROUND ATTACK. RADIO
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CONTACT WITH RF COMPANY LOST AT 1620 HOURS, REPORTEDLY DUE TO INTENSITY OF ENEMY PRESSURE. LATER, TWO NCO' S WHO HAD BECOME SEPARATED FROM THE COMPANY DURING THE BATTLE REPORTED IN AT RF BN HQS BUT DID NOT KNOW STAEDUC-
TION OF FORCES SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN SUCH A WAY AS NOT TO BE HARM-FUL TO EITHER SIDE. HE SAID THIS POINT OF VIEW WAS NOW GENERALLY ACCEPTED BY MOST DELEGATIONS. HOWEVER, HE FELT IT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO REQUEST THE AUSTRIANS TO DECLARE THEIR SYMPATHY AND SUP-PORT FOR THIS POSITION ON EVERY APPROPRIATE OCCASION WHETHER IN BASIC DOCUMENTS, COMMUNIQUES OR VERBALLY.

4. WODAK TOLD CHARGE HE FEARED THAT KREISKY MAY BE FACED WITH A SIMILAR REQUEST DURING HIS VISIT NEXT WEEK TO BUDAPEST. HE SAID AUSTRIAN FONOFF OFFICIALS HAD DECIDED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CHANCEL-LOR THAT IF THIS HAPPENED HE SHOULD STATE THAT AUSTRIA, AS A NEU-TRAL NATION, WILL BE HAPPY WITH A SOLUTION WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL PARTIES.

5. KIRCHSCHLAEGER ASKED SOVIETS WHAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BALANCED REDUCTION AND THE SOVIET FORMULA AS EXPRESSED BY KHLESTOV.
QUESTION WAS SIDESTEPPED. KIRCHSCHLAEGER ALSO SAID THAT AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO DO MORE FOR MBFR CONFEREES BUT DID NOT KNOW WHAT. HAD THOUGHT OF SOCIAL EVENTS, BUT DID NOT KNOW WHOM TO INVITE; HE ADDED FACETIOUSLY WITH A SMILE THAT GOA WOULD NOT KNOW HOW OR WHERE TO SEAT THE VARIOUS HEADS OF DELEGATIONS. KHLESTOV DID NOT LAUGH AT THIS QUIP.

6. KHLESTOV REPLIED SAYING THAT HE WAS DELIGHTED THAT AUSTRIA WOULD LIKE TO PLAY MORE OF A ROLE AND REMINDED THE MINISTER THAT THE SOVIETS HAD ALWAYS SAID THAT ALL INTERESTED PARTIES SHOULD BE INVITED TO ATTEND. IT WAS CLEAR, SAID KHLESTOV, THAT THE USSR AND GOA WERE IN AGREEMENT ON THIS POINT. KIRCHSCHLAEGER, ACCORD-ING TO WODAK, IMMEDIATELY CORRECTED KHLESTOV, SAYING THAT HE HAD BEEN MERELY REFERRING TO SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS SUCH AS THOSE ORGANIZ-ED FOR SALT WHICH HE HAD BEEN GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND HAD BEEN QUITE USEFUL.

7. KHLESTOV THEN TURNED AROUND KIRCHSCHLAEGER' S SUGGESTION AND
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SAID HE, KHLESTOV, WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO INCLUDE THE AUSTRIAN IN THE NEXT PLENARY COCKTAIL PARTY. TO WHICH KIRCHSCHLAEGER REPLIED THAT HE WULD RATHER NOT BE INVITED UNLESS OTHER " SIMILAR" COUNTRIES WERE INCLUDED.

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8. WODAK SAID THAT KIRCHSCHLAEGER HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO MAKE IT QUITE PLAIN TO U. S. THAT WHATEVER THE SOVIETS MIGHT SAY, AUSTRIA HAD NOT CHANGED ITS POSITION IN ANY WAY, THAT IT HAD NOT ASKED FOR A GREATER ROLE, THAT IT HAD MERELY OFFERED ITS HOSPITALITY. HE SAID THAT IF THE SOVIETS WERE TO IMPLY OR SAY ANYTHING ELSE, US REPS SHOULD NOT, OF COURSE, REVEAL THIS CONVERSATION, BUT SHOULD FEEL FREE TO SAY THAT THEY FREQUENTLY SEE AUSTRIAN OFFICIALS AND THAT THIS WAS NOT AT ALL THEIR IMPRESSION OF THE AUSTRIAN ATTITUDE. MOWINCKEL

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Errors: n/a
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